

THE O.S. STAMPS OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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Penny stamps (out of a sheet of 240), printed on "star" paper, were issued with the first locally-printed impressions.

In dealing with the history of the postal issues of New Zealand, as matters now stand, it is unfortunately inevitable that conjecture, to a certain extent, must enter into any discussion upon them.

I think, however, that I shall be expressing the wish of all Philatelists if I say that we hope to hear further from New Zealand and its collectors about these interesting stamps.

The O.S. Stamps of New South Wales.

BY N.S.W. AND CROWN.

(Continued from page 5.)



At the time of issue I was residing in Tasmania, and was in a position to obtain large numbers of O.S. New South Wales stamps from official correspondence, and I distinctly remember obtaining quantities of the 3d. and 8d. (referred to later on) with the overprint in red. Of the 2d., however, but one or two copies came to hand.

The authorities at the Government Printing-office are at the present day positive that the 1s. was the only value at any time overprinted in red, in the proper official course. They are, however, prepared to admit that some few copies from supplies already issued in an unmarked state, might have been returned to the printing-office and overprinted in red; but no entry would be made in such case, as the face-value of the stamps had already been debited to the cashier, G.P.O.

There can be no doubt, however, that the first supplies of both 3d. and 8d. were overprinted in red, and in the ordinary official course. The number of specimens of unquestioned origin in existence, and the testimony of contemporary collectors of unimpeachable veracity, are quite sufficient to support the truth of this statement. With regard to the 2d. value, the facts seem to point either to a small trial-printing in red, issued simultaneously with those in black, or an "irregular" printing on sheets previously debited. In the latter case it must be distinctly understood that the subsequent "regular" use of such stamps for ordinary official correspondence would establish their claim to acceptance as genuine issues, even if the overprint was obtained in red from motives not wholly free from Philatelic suggestion. As there are several instances of this "irregular" overprinting to be subsequently referred to, most of which are absolutely free from such suggestion, the varieties mentioned must be accepted in all good faith as properly admissible.

To return to the issues. The first supply of the 3d. value was issued to public offices on the 7th December, 1879, and from that date to the

15th March, 1880, exactly 3,000 of that value were issued. On the 22nd March, 1880, a further supply of 6,000 was printed, 60 of which were issued to public offices on the 31st of that month. Without straining any point, we can accept these as bearing the overprint in *black*, a colour which remained unchanged during the existence of the O.S. stamps.

On the 22nd December, 1879, there is an entry of a requisition for 2,500 8d. "plain" (*i.e.*, without overprint) stamps; but during the same week an issue of 590 8d. stamps was made to public offices. As no further requisition for 8d. stamps was made until the 22nd February, 1880, when 5,000 with "O.S." were ordered, and as 2,380 were issued to public offices at various periods from the 22nd December, 1879, to the 22nd February, 1880, it may safely be asserted that the "plain" stamps ordered were surcharged "O.S." in *red*, either before being supplied to the cashier, on his verbal requisition, or in the "irregular" manner previously described, returned after having been debited and surcharged. The comparative rarity of the 8d. with red overprint, and the undoubted fact of its being used contemporaneously with the 3d. red overprint, is sufficient evidence to enable us to arrive at the conclusion that the 2,500 8d., of 22nd December, 1879, were overprinted "O.S." in *red*.

On the 15th December, 1879, a requisition was made for 1,250 5s. "plain" stamps. No requisition for O.S. 5s. stamps was made until 31st January, 1884, and yet 14 were issued to public offices on 15th February, 1880, and a large number at subsequent dates. In this case, also, there can be no doubt that the 1,250 were "irregularly" overprinted, the letters being in *black*.

The next value issued to public offices was the 5d., 96 being supplied on the 7th, and 24 on the 31st May, 1880. No requisition for O.S. stamps of that value was sent to the Government printer until the 15th August, 1890, although additional supplies of the value were furnished to public offices as follows: 96 on 15th November, 1880; 100 on 15th January, 1881; 100 on 22nd March, 1881; and 200 on 31st March, 1885. Very few 5d. stamps appear to have been used at any time up to 1880, and the old supply, printed on paper watermarked with double-line figure 5, was sufficient to meet all demands. About 1882 the Crown N.S.W. Type I. paper was used, and shortly afterwards that with Type II. Therefore the first 5d. stamps issued to public offices were on "5" paper, and the surcharge probably was in *red*. This variety is catalogued by Collin and Calman, but I have never seen a satisfactory copy. Still there is so much doubtful about some of these "irregular" varieties, that it is impossible to definitely support or condemn any one of them; I can only give all the information available, and make what deductions are possible. Collectors must to a certain extent exercise their own judgment about them.

Next in order of date came the 9d. and 10d. values. These were issued to public offices "irregularly" (*i.e.*, without previous O.S. requisition) on the 31st May, 1880, the numbers being only 20 of the 9d., and 12 of the 10d. Subsequent "irregular" issues to public offices were made as follows:—120 of each value on the 15th January, 1881; 120 9d. and 360 10d. on the 22nd March, 1881; 72 10d. on the 15th October, 1881; 120 10d. on the

30th November, 1883; and 40 9d. and 48 10d. on the 15th July, 1885; and it was not until the 30th June, 1894, that these values were requisitioned for as O.S. stamps in the regular way—60 of each being furnished on that date. These, I *know*, bore the surcharge in *black*.

Now, with regard to the 9d. and 10d. issue up to 1885, the former was watermarked Crown N.S.W. (Type I.), and the latter 10, and there is ground for belief that the surcharge was in red on all supplies. I have seen undoubtedly genuine copies of the 10d. in used condition, and also the 9d. unused, but for which I could not equally vouch. It is, however, singular that the authorities at the printing-office assert that the red surcharge was *never* applied to these values, and that a supply printed for exchange purposes, in November, 1891, and surcharged "Specimen," bore the "O.S." in *black*. As, however, no catalogue of earlier date than 1895 mentions these values with *black* surcharge, other than those with "*Specimen*" in addition; and further, as I had never seen or heard of a copy with black surcharge prior to 1891, we must accept the red surcharge as that of the early "irregular" printings, 1881-5.

A minute for the Executive Council, dated 17th April, 1882, submitting regulations regarding the use of the O.S. stamps for approval, contains the words "printing thereon in *black* of the letters 'O.S.,' &c.

On the 18th November, 1885, the long rectangular fiscal stamp of 5s., surcharged "POSTAGE," in "erased" capitals, was issued for postal and telegraphic purposes, although it was not gazetted until the 22nd December following. The first supply of O.S. 5s. stamps requisitioned for subsequently to that date consisted of 300, on the 15th December, 1885. It appears doubtful whether the long type was immediately used for O.S. purposes, as the Inspector of Stamps generally kept a stock in hand to supply requisitions, and he probably had some of the circular stamps already overprinted. However, the long stamp is catalogued without reservation, and exists in the set surcharged "SPECIMEN" sold by the G.P.O. about 1891. I have never seen a copy without "SPECIMEN," either used or unused, but in default of any more definite information, the 15th December, 1885, must be accepted as the date of issue. The "O.S." was in black, but the letters were of an entirely new type, being large ornamental capitals. Further supplies of 5s. stamps were issued to public offices as follows: 300 on 26th April, 1886; 250 on 22nd December, 1886; 300 on 7th October, 1887; 400 on 15th December, 1887; 500 on 30th April, 1888; and 300 on 7th November, 1888; a total of 2,050. The great rarity of this variety points to one of two conclusions. Either the issue of 300 on 15th December, 1885, was the only supply of the type issued, and the circular stamps were reverted to, or else a large supply of the circular type was on hand, and only upon exhaustion was a small supply of the long type issued prior to the issue of the centennial 5s. Of course the existence of dated used copies would tend to settle this point.

On the 7th January, 1887, five £1 O.S. stamps were requisitioned for. The long £1 fiscal, surcharged "POSTAGE," was issued to the public on the 23rd November, 1885, and this being the only type of that value in existence at the date of the requisition, it must have been the one surcharged. No

further requisition for the £1 value with "O.S." was made until some six months after the issue of the centennial stamp. The long £1 stamp with "O.S." in ornamental capitals in black, is found amongst the "Specimen" set of 1891, so there can be little doubt that the five issued for postal use in January, 1887, bore a similar overprint. This *should* be one of the rarest stamps known—if any of the five are still in existence.

On the 1st May, 1888, the 1d. and £1 of the centennial type were issued to the public. As printings of the 1d. value for official purposes were made about every fortnight, we may take the week ending 7th May, 1888, during which 60,000 O.S. 1d. were issued, as the date of issue of the centennial 1d.

The centennial 2d. was issued to the public on the 1st September, 1888, and with "O.S." during the week ending 7th September.

The 4d. followed on the 8th October, 1888, and with "O.S." during the week ending 15th October.

During the week ending 22nd November, 1888, 20 of the £1 value with "O.S." were issued. These were of the centennial type on the old 5/- paper, and I believe the overprint was in *black*.



The centennial 6d. was issued on the 26th November, 1888, but no O.S. of that value were issued until the week ending 21st December.

The 8d. was issued on the 17th January, 1889, and with "O.S." during the week ending 15th March.

The centennial 1s. was issued to the public on the 21st February, 1889, and with "O.S." during the week ending 15th March. This stamp has been chronicled with the "O.S." in red, but it was never issued in any other colour than black.

The last of the centennial series, the 5s., was issued to the public on the 13th March, 1889, being printed on the old 5/- paper. 100 copies with "O.S." were issued during the week ending 30th April. The overprint was in red, if the evidence of several apparently genuine copies I have seen can be accepted. The colour of the stamp is a greyish purple; the printing is spotty, and the letters "O.S." are lightly printed, and have a thin appearance. The perforation is 10. This stamp has been catalogued with the surcharge in black, but if it is to be accepted as genuine, the red surcharge must be rejected, for there was but the one printing with "O.S." on the old paper, and then only two sheets of 50 were surcharged. It is quite out of the question to suppose that the two sheets were overprinted in different colours.

The 10s. long fiscal, surcharged "POSTAGE," was also issued with the "O.S." in ornamental capitals in black during the week ending 30th April, 1889. Ten were issued on this occasion, 20 on the 31st July, and 40 on the 30th November, 1889. During the period 1890-4, 191 additional copies of the 10s. value were issued, making 261 in all.

The new paper for the centennial 5s. and 20s. stamps was brought into use in January, 1890. That for the 5s. bore the watermark  and that for the 20s. 

The 5s. was first issued on this paper with the "O.S." overprint in black, in small type, during the week ending 15th February, 1890. 200 were then printed, 300 for the week ending 22nd August, and 100 for the week ending 15th December, 1890. 1450 were issued during the period 1891-4, or 2050 in all.

Ten of the 20s. were issued during the week ending 15th March, 1890, and 10 in 1894, or only 20 in all. The overprint was in black, and in the ordinary small type.

The "Postal Union" series of $\frac{1}{2}$ d., $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., and $12\frac{1}{2}$ d., was issued to the public in 1891-2. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. grey, with value surcharged in black, was overprinted "O.S." in black, on the 21st January, 1891, 6,000 being issued. With the exception of 345 for exchange purposes, and further overprinted "Specimen," no others were printed.

The $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. received the "O.S." overprint in black on the 10th January, 1891; 6,000 being then printed, and 24,000 additional were printed and issued up to 31st December, 1894.

The $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $12\frac{1}{2}$ d. were overprinted "O.S." in black on the 21st January, 1891; 6,000 of each value being printed. No other printings were made, and this supply was issued at various periods up to December, 1894. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d., grey, altered type, was overprinted "O.S." in black on the 10th May, 1892, and 322,000 were issued between that date and the 31st December, 1894.

So much for the dates of issue of the adhesive stamps. No official cognizance is taken of the varieties of paper, watermark, perforation, or colour of overprint, so the subdivision of each type under these headings must be carried out partly by conjecture and partly by observation of the stamps themselves. For convenience of arrangement I will divide the O.S. stamps into five classes, termed: (1) The De La Rue series, including 1d., red; 2d., blue; 4d., brown; 6d., lilac; 9d., black on brown; 10d., lilac; and 1s., black. (2) The Perkins and Bacon series, including 3d., green; 5d., dark green; 8d., yellow; and 5s., purple. (3) The "Postage" surcharged series, including 5s., lilac and green; 10s., lilac and carmine; and £1, lilac and carmine. (4) The Centennial series, including 1d., purple; 2d., blue; 4d., brown; 6d., rosine; 8d., plum; 1s., brown-violet; 5s., purple; and 20s., blue. (5) The Postal Union series, including $\frac{1}{2}$ d., grey and black; $\frac{1}{2}$ d., grey; $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., ultramarine; $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., brown and black; and $12\frac{1}{2}$ d., vermilion and black.

Class 1 were all, with the exception of the 10d., printed on N.S.W. and Crown paper of both types; the 1d. and 2d. on Stamp Duty paper with watermark N.S.W. only (once to each two stamps); and the 10d. on "10" paper alone. The perforations were numerous, and can only be given in the tabulated list at the end of this article.

Of Class 2, the 3d. was printed on N.S.W. and Crown paper, both types, and the "10" paper. This stamp has also been catalogued on paper watermarked with double-lined figure 6. As this watermark had been obsolete for many years before the introduction of the "O.S." overprint, the variety appears to be of somewhat doubtful authenticity. Still it is possible that a sheet or two of remainders were unearthed and overprinted.

The 5d. was printed on the paper watermarked with double-lined figure 5 up to about 1880, and subsequently on N.S.W. and Crown paper, both types. The 8d. was only printed on the latter papers, and the 5s. only on that watermarked 5s.

Class 3 were only on the Stamp Duty paper specially prepared for the long series of fiscal stamps watermarked with the letters N.S.W. The paper of the 10s. is distinctly bluish, that of the 5s. and 20s. less markedly so, and it is also quite white in some instances. The word "POSTAGE" is in blue on the 10s., and in black on the other two values.

Of class 4 the values up to 1s. were all on N.S.W. and Crown paper, Type II. only. The 1d. and 2d. were also on Stamp Duty paper, and the 5s. and 20s. were at first on the old 5s. watermarked paper, and subsequently on the new papers specially prepared for each value respectively.

Class 5 were all on the N.S.W. and Crown paper, Type II. only.

In 1894 it was decided to abolish the system of franking correspondence by means of O.S. stamps, and to substitute a cover marked "O.H.M.S.," and the name of the department using it. The new system came into force on the 1st January, 1895, and the *Gazette* notice was as follows :—

[9893]

"POSTAL AND ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT,

"GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,

"19th December, 1894.

"It is hereby notified, for public information, that His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to approve of the adoption, from the 1st January, 1895, of the following Regulations, in lieu of those now in force, relative to the prepayment of postage on official correspondence by means of O.S. Stamps, which practice will be discontinued from the date mentioned :—

"1. All official correspondence despatched from Public Officers shall be allowed to pass through the Post as duly prepaid, provided that the envelopes or covers bear the endorsement 'O.H.M.S.' with the name of the Department, or branch thereof, from which they emanate, in the lower left-hand corner.

"2. Postmasters and others will consider Official letters, &c., marked in the manner above-described, as prepaid.

"3. The cover of any letter, &c., purporting to be an Official one, that may be posted and found not to conform with the above regulations, will be specially obtained from the addressee, and the circumstances reported to the Department concerned.

"4. Any Official found guilty of improperly using an Official envelope or cover for private correspondence, or any other private purpose whatsoever, will be dismissed the Service.

"5. Any Postmaster having reason to believe that these regulations are being availed of by Officials or others for private correspondence, shall make a special report of the circumstances to the Deputy Postmaster-General.

"JOSEPH COOK."

At the time the O.S. stamps system was abolished, large quantities of the stamps were in the various Government Departments. As these had been obtained on requisition, and their face-value debited to the votes of the respective departments, it was necessary, in order to avoid confusion of accounts, to recall and destroy them. This was done; the stamps being

treated as "spoiled and repurchased," and burnt in the presence of an audit official.

In addition to these stamps there were a number in the hands of the Distributor of Stamps (G.P.O.), in readiness to meet requisitions. Some collectors and dealers having expressed a desire to purchase these remainders, authority was obtained to sell them in the ordinary way over the stamp sales counter at face-value, on the distinct understanding that they were not to be available for postage.

The *Gazette* notice relating to the sale of these remainders is here given:—

"POSTAL AND ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT,
"GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,
"22nd July, 1895.

"His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has approved of the balance of O.S. (On Service) stamps in the hands of this Department, remaining unissued on the substitution of the 'Frank' System for that of prepayment of official postage by means of O.S. stamps, being sold to stamp collectors and others at face-value, on the understanding that they cannot be used for postage.

"The stamps available for the purpose are: Adhesive stamps (of the same type as the current postage stamps), $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 8d., 1s., 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and 5s.; post cards, 1d.

"JOSEPH COOK."

These stamps were genuine original remainders, and were (and are still) sold at face value in an uncanceled condition. There was but a small supply of the 5s. value, which soon was sold out; but all the others are still on sale.

However, this supply did not contain sufficient varieties to meet the demands of collectors, who clamoured for the obsolete types, and especially the red surcharges. With a desire to meet this demand the Department determined to reprint such varieties as were not then in stock, and furnish them to collectors. The face-value of a complete series was nearly £6, and as this price would be beyond the reach of most collectors, and as the audit regulations forbade the sale of uncanceled stamps at less than face-value, it was decided to obliterate the stamps with an undated cancelling mark, consisting of the letters "N.S.W." in three concentric ovals, and to sell the sets at £2 each. One thousand sets were printed, and *all* were cancelled without a single exception. 900 sets bore the above-described obliteration, and 100 were cancelled with "G.P.O." in three concentric ovals for gratis distribution to other postal administrations. The following is the *Gazette* notice:—

"POSTAL AND ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT,
"GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,
"15th August, 1895.

"His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has approved of the sale, to stamp collectors and others, of complete sets of obliterated O.S. stamps, at the price of £2 per set.

"JOSEPH COOK."

It is unnecessary for me to advert at any length to the storm of indignation which was raised by the Philatelic journals at this action of the New South Wales Department. Suffice it to say that after about 250 of the 900 sets were sold, and 50 of the 100 official sets were distributed, it was decided to cease the sale of stamps which had been provided to meet a very real demand, as was evidenced by the expenditure of £500 on them by collectors who were fully aware of their character. However much, as Philatelists, we may deplore the reprinting of these stamps, we have only our own fellow-hobbyists to blame, for had it not been for the demands of certain collectors, and their *suggestions*, the series would never have been prepared.

The withdrawal was announced in the following terms:—

"POSTAL AND ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT,
"GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,
"18th March, 1896.

"With reference to the authority for the sale, to stamp collectors and others, of complete sets of obliterated O.S. postage stamps, at £2 per set, advertised in the *Government Gazette* under date of the 15th August last, it is hereby notified that His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has approved of the sale of these stamps being discontinued.

"JOSEPH COOK."

The remaining 650 £2 sets were burnt, and the balance of the gratis sets were surcharged "Specimen" in addition to the "G.P.O." obliteration.

Hence it will be seen:—

1. There were *no reprints* of the values mentioned in the *Gazette* notice of the 22nd July, 1895.
2. Not more than 300 of each of the reprinted stamps have got into the hands of collectors and others.
3. *Every* reprint is cancelled.
4. Uncancelled O.S. stamps are necessarily originals.
5. Many of the varieties of the reprints are infinitely rarer than original stamps of the same type, and

6. *Pace* fraudulent manipulation, the reprints bear the obliteration of a portion of the cancellation described in one of the four corners; the stamps having been cancelled in blocks of four, the impression being placed in the centre of each block; and the stamps are gummed.

If these facts are committed to memory no collector need be afraid of taking a reprint for an original.

I will, in the near future, supplement this paper with a reference list of adhesive O.S. stamps, and later on give full particulars with regard to the O.S. post cards, stamped envelopes, and wrappers.

